

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 A-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8752

INFO AMCONSUL ADANA

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AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: STUDENT DISTURBANCES CONTINUE

REF: (A) ANKARA 1810 (B) IZMIR 54 (C) ISTANBUL 799

(D) ISTANBUL 792 (E) ISTANBUL A-13

SUMMARY: STUDENT VIOLENCE HAS BEEN A CONTINUING PHENOMENON
IN RECENT WEEKS. END SUMMARY.

1. CLASHES BETWEEN EXTREME LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST TURKISH
STUDENT GROUPS HAVE CONTINUED AT A FAIRLY HIGH RATE DURING RECENT
WEEKS, RESULTING IN ONE MORE STUDENT DEATH (THE FOURTH SINCE
CLASSES BEGAN LAST FALL) AND SCORES OF INJURIES. IN ADDITION TO
THE INCIDENTS REPORTED IN REFTELS, THERE WERE OUTBREAKS OF
VIOLENCE IN ELAZIG MARCH 16, BALIKESIR MARCH 18, AT THE ISTANBUL
FORESTRY FACULTY MARCH 21, THE IZMIR AEGEAN UNIVERSITY
MARCH 24, TRABZON APRIL 7, CORUM APRIL 8, AND KONYA APRIL 8.
MOST OF THE REPORTED INCIDENTS, HOWEVER, OCCURED AT SEVERAL
SCHOOLS IN ANKARA, NOTABLY THE GAZI TEACHERS COLLEGE (MARCH 17,
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20, 24 AND 28) AND POLITICAL SCIENCES FACULTY (MARCH 28, APRIL 4

AND 8). VIOLENCE ALSO STRUCK OTHER CAMPUSES IN THE CITY MARCH 25, 26, 28, 31, APRIL 1 AND 4. THE DEATH MENTIONED ABOVE RESULTED FROM FIGHTING AT THE TOURISM AND COMMERCIAL TEACHERS SCHOOL MARCH 28.

2. GENERALLY THE FIGHTS HAVE STARTED OVER CAMPUS MATTERS. ANTI-AMERICANISM HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN A PRIMARY FACTOR. ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, THE INCIDENTS -- USUALLY IN THE FORM OF CLASHES BETWEEN SMALL GROUPS OF RIGHTIST "COMMANDOS" AND EXTREME LEFTIST STUDENTS -- HAVE BECOME MORE FREQUENT SINCE JUSTICE PARTY CHAIRMAN SULEYMAN DEMIREL WAS DESIGNATED TO FORM A NATIONALIST FRONT GOVERNMENT ON MARCH 19. WHILE THE INCIDENTS HAVE BECOME AN ALMOST DAILY OCCURENCE IN RECENT WEEKS, THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES HAVE GENERALLY SUCCEEDED IN CONTAINING THE OUTBREAKS, ARRESTING SOME IF NOT ALL PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEEDING WITH JUDICIAL QNTION. THE ADANA STATE SECURITY COURT, FOR EXAMPLE, IS PRESENTLY CONSIDERING THE CASES OF 51 DEFENDANTS IMPLICATED IN THE FEBRUARY 15-16 INCIDENTS IN MALATYA.

3. COMMENT: SEVERAL UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS HAVE TOLD US THEY SEE NO EARLY END TO THE PRESENT CYCLE OF INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE.

A. ONE SOURCE WHO SUPPORTS REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) TOLD US THAT EXTREME LEFTIST YOUTH GROUPS MAY INITIATE A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS AIMED AT DISCREDITING PRIMIN DEMIREL AND NATIONAL ACTION PARTY (NAP) CHAIRMAN ALPASLAN TURKES. HE SPECULATED THAT THE "COMMANDOS", MANY OF WHOM ARE ASSOCIAYED WITH THE NAP'S YOUTH ORGANIZATION ULKU OCAKLARI, MIGHT THEN RETALIATE AND THE SITUATION ON CAMPUSES COULD DEGENERATE INTO A SERIES OF GRADUALLY ESCALATING REPRMSALS. HOWEVER, HE SAID, YOUTH GROUPS AFFILIATED WITH THE RPP HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED NOT RPT NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY DEMONSTRATIONS, BOYCOTTS OR OTHER INCIDENTS. THE EXTREME LEFTIST GROUPS, HOWEVER, ARE "BEYOND REACH", HE SAID.

B. ANOTHER ACADEMIC SOURCE, ALSO A SUPPORTER OF RPP LEADER BULENT ECEVIT, EXPRESSED SIMILAR CONCERN OVER THE PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUED STUDENT VIOLENCE. HOWEVER, HE WAS MORE CRITICAL OF UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES' HANDLING OF THE INCIDENTS, CONFIDENTIAL

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SAYING THAT IN SOME CASES THEY HAD "OVERREACTED". HE ALSO QUESTIONED WHETHER THE NATIONALIST FRONT GOVERNMENT WOULD DEAL EVENHANDEDLY IN PUTTING DOWN FUTURE OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE.

4. THE PERSISTENCE OF OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE ON THE CAMPUSES HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE FEELING THAT YOUTHFUL UNREST IS A FACTOR OF CONTINUING IMPORTANCE IN THE TURKISH POLITICAL SCENE. WHILE THE INCIDENTS TO ATE APPEAR PRIMARILY TO HAVE

INVOLVED CLASHES BETWEEN RIVAL STUDENT GROUPS FOR INFLUENCE ON
THE CAMPUSES, THERE IS CONCERN HERE THAT FUTURE CLASHES COULD
TAKE ON A MORE OVERTLY POLITICAL THEME, INVOLVING EXTREMIST
OPPONENTS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE NATIONALIST FRONT GOVERNMENT.
ALSO, AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT PREVIOUSLY, ANTI-AMERICANISM
SOONER OR LATER IS LIKELY ONCE MORE TO BECOME A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR
IN EXTREMIST STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES.
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